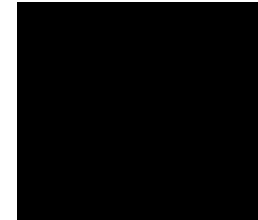




FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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High Point Becomes First Certified Autism Destination™ on the East Coast

Many local organizations have made the commitment to become Certified Autism Centers™ (CAC) to make High Point a more inclusive destination to live, work and play.

HIGH POINT, NC (May 9, 2023) — High Point has become the first Certified Autism Destination™ (CAD) on the east coast and the second CAD in the United States. This distinction is awarded by the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES) and recognizes High Point's commitment to making its attractions, hotels, restaurants, and public spaces accessible and welcoming to autistic and sensory-sensitive individuals and their families.

This initiative was spearheaded by Visit High Point, who worked to onboard a variety of hospitality partners and businesses over the course of two years.

"We are proud to be at the forefront of inclusive tourism and to provide a safe and enjoyable experience for all of our visitors," says Nancy Bowman, Visit High Point vice president of branding. "We believe that everyone should have the opportunity to travel and explore new places, and this certification will help us achieve that goal."

The CAD certification process involved extensive staff training for partner organizations in the city, including attractions, restaurants, hotels, and recreation facilities. This training has equipped the city with the necessary tools to better understand and respond to the needs of autistic and sensory-sensitive individuals.

In addition to providing a well-rounded, multidisciplinary training program and specialized credentials to the CACs in High Point, IBCCES has audited many of the individual businesses, hospitality options, attractions, and restaurants in order to develop custom sensory guides. These sensory guides provide individuals with a helpful tool to prepare for their visit and understand how different activities or interactions may affect their senses.

"We're thrilled to announce High Point as a CAD and applaud the community on the work that has gone into this initiative," says Meredith Tekin, IBCCES president. "There are millions of individuals and families looking for more accessible and welcoming destinations, so this is really meaningful to a lot of travelers. IBCCES looks forward to continuing this movement with Visit High Point and its partners for years to come!"

By becoming a Certified Autism Destination, High Point is demonstrating its commitment to ensuring the city is an inclusive and accessible space for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), which occurs in nearly 1 in 36 individuals according to estimates from CDC's Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network.

“In our 40-year history as a tourism agency, making our destination more relevant and inclusive is a valued priority that complements High Point’s welcoming spirit and strong sense of community,” says Melody Burnett, Visit High Point president. “We are thrilled to share this news with our city and industry partners during National Travel and Tourism Week that celebrates the positive impact that the tourism industry has on our overall economy.”

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About Visit High Point:

Visit High Point is the official destination management and marketing organization that positions High Point as a vibrant destination that visitors will enjoy, and locals will want to promote. Our vision is to leverage High Point’s reputation as the Home Furnishings Capital of the World™ and the home of a world-class University to further the evolution of High Point as a unique destination. While the focus is to increase economic impact by providing first-class service to our visitors and meeting planners, Visit High Point also works to develop our city as a year-round destination that is competitive in the marketplace, generating more brand ambassadors and fans. We want each visitor to make yourself at home in High Point, NC. Established by state legislation in 1984, Visit High Point, a non-profit 501 c 6 organization is funded by a self-imposed three percent room occupancy tax on local hotels. No taxpayer funds – city, county, or state – are used to fund Visit High Point. The Regional Visitors Center is located at 1634 N. Main St., Suite 102, High Point, N.C. For more information, visit www.visithighpoint.com.

About IBCCES:

Delivering The Global Standard For Training and Certification in The Field of Cognitive Disorders – IBCCES provides a series of certifications that empower professionals to be leaders in their field and improve the outcomes for the individuals they serve. These programs are recognized around the world as the leading benchmark for training and certification in the areas of autism and other cognitive disorders.